



HELPING HOOSIER CHILDREN GET AHEAD

Office of Governor Mitch Daniels

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 5, 2006

STATE INCREASES CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE

Wiser budget spending and an improved error rate at the Family and Social Services Administration has freed up an additional \$18 million for 2006 and 2007 to help low-income families pay for childcare, eliminating the waiting list for childcare vouchers.

The additional money will provide care for 3,000 more children, a 10 percent increase, and will reduce the average wait time for vouchers from an average of 49 days to as few as 10 days, as funding is applied.

Mitch's Kids Aimed toward At-Risk Youth

Indiana Pacers' Star Jermaine O'Neill and Governor Mitch Daniels hope a new statewide program called Mitch's Kids will improve the education prospects of low income children in Indiana.

Mitch's Kids will help over 5,000 5-12 year-old at-risk youngsters in the Boys & Girls Club after-school POWER Hour program.

The POWER Hour is an after-school program that helps kids improve their math and reading skills and establish good daily homework habits.

Mitch's Kids is open to all Hoosier youngsters who qualify for free or reduced lunch programs.

Full Day Kindergarten on Governor's Agenda for 2007

One of Governor Mitch Daniels' top legislative priorities in 2007 will be improving Indiana's public schools, including the expansion of full day kindergarten.

The Governor has always supported full day kindergarten, when the state could afford it. Now, thanks to a strengthening economy, Indiana's first balanced budget in eight years, and sound fiscal policy, the Governor believes the state is in the fiscal position to make this valuable educational opportunity available to more Hoosier students.

Full day kindergarten can be one resource available to prevent the achievement gap before it forms and to better prepare children for life and work.

Governor Daniels is currently involved in an active conversation with educators, parents, and lawmakers to explore how full day kindergarten can be implemented in order to best meet the needs of Hoosiers.



Governor Mitch Daniels attends graduation at Campagna Academy in Lake County.

Governor Daniels Repays Debt to Schools

As promised, Governor Mitch Daniels recently ordered the state to fully repay the debt owed to K-12 schools, repaying the funds withheld from school systems during the previous era of deficit spending. A total of \$160 million was paid to schools by the end of July. This payment follows the Governor's order to use the proceeds from Indiana's successful Tax Amnesty program to repay \$156 million in January.

For too long, schools have not received the funds that were owed to them. Governor Daniels will continue to support higher academic standards in Indiana and bring about positive change for Hoosier students.

More Dollars are Headed to Hoosier Classrooms

Governor Daniels made it a priority during the 2006 legislative session to help shift more dollars into Hoosier classrooms.

House Enrolled Act 1006 gives Indiana schools more authority and support for effective local decisions that reduce overhead.

Indiana currently ranks 50th in the Nation in the percentage of K-12 employees

who are certified teachers in the classroom.

"Helping schools economize on overhead is the best route to more and better paid teachers, without further burdening taxpayers. New tools and new freedom to cut costs in the back office means more money on the front lines of education," said Governor Daniels.

This new law provides school corporations with

broader and clearer purchasing authority to participate in transactions such as creating insurance pools, purchasing natural gas as a single entity, and developing shared services arrangements for overhead functions.

Every 1% increase in educational spending could pump \$100 million into the classroom.